

MPA 20

Bil Iechyd y Cyhoedd (Isafbris am Alcohol) (Cymru)
Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill
Ymateb gan Dr Sadie Boniface a Dr Sally Marlow
Response from Dr Sadie Boniface and Dr Sally Marlow

Addictions Department PO48
Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience
16 De Crespigny Park
King's College London
London SE5 8AF



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To whom it may concern,

Re. Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) (Wales) Bill

Thank you for inviting us to give our views on the proposed Bill, following our recent publication on this topic - *Evidence for the effectiveness of minimum pricing of alcohol: a systematic review and assessment using the Bradford Hill criteria for causality* - in the journal BMJ Open (available online at: <http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/7/5/e013497>).

In this review we synthesised evidence from a wide range of studies, and found that there was strong support that minimum unit pricing for alcohol would benefit society in the form of reduced consumption overall, reduced alcohol morbidity and mortality. The policy should also narrow health inequalities. There is strong scientific evidence that the cheapest products are disproportionately consumed by the heaviest drinkers. In particular, introducing minimum unit pricing should help to address one of the flaws in the excise system whereby having different taxation of different types of alcohol means that white ciders are subject to a lower amount of taxation per unit than all other drink categories, therefore are disproportionately cheaper when compared on alcohol content.

We are supportive of the Bill as one component of a wider strategy to reduce alcohol related harm. Alcohol marketing and availability also have roles to play, and provision of specialist treatment services is crucial, particularly given the cuts in addiction services in recent years. If minimum unit pricing is implemented, there should be adequate resource available for a rigorous independent academic evaluation.

We do not feel best-placed to comment on the potential barriers to implementation or unintended consequences of the Bill, but would encourage the National Assembly for Wales to work with the Scottish Government to learn from the experience with implementation following the legal challenges faced in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Sadie Boniface & Dr Sally Marlow